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10/046,498

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EXAMINER

BARTLEY, KENNETH

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/046,498	Applicant(s) TANEDA ET AL.	
	Examiner Kenneth L. Bartley	Art Unit 3693	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 December 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>12/10/2007</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Receipt of Applicant's amendment and response filed on December 10, 2007 is acknowledged.

Response to Amendment

2. Claims 1 and 9 are currently amended. Claim 16 is new. Claims 1-16 are pending in the application and are provided to be examined upon their merits.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed on December 10, 2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The Examiner's response to the Applicant's comments/arguments is in **bold** below. The Examiner notes that the Applicant is using the application of Shiloh filed on March 22, 2001 and therefore the Examiner responds to that art. However, the Examiner maintains that similar support can be found in Shiloh's provisional application filed March 23, 2000.

Applicant notes rejection of claims on page 6 of Remarks:

In the Office Action, on page 4, claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Shiloh (U.S. Publication No. 2001/0037316).

Applicant emphasizes use of manager, pg. 6:

Amended independent claim 1 recites, "communicating, via a network, virtual personal information of a virtual world having a representation format similar to that of real personal information of a real world to a manager within a virtual world," which is supported by the embodiment of the invention on page 5 lines 4-7 and page 13 lines 20-27 of the Specification.

The Examiner finds in Applicant's specification:

[0032] In FIG. 1, the real user 10 registers in advance personal information of the real user 10 in the real world (hereinafter referred to as real personal information) and virtual personal information of the virtual user 1, to a manager (managing apparatus) 6.

[0037] For example, an authentication number or a password which is to be input by the real user 10 when approving the settlement may be registered in advance to the manager 6, and the manager 6 may require the real user 10 to input the authentication number or password via the Internet or telephone when requiring the approval of the settlement.

[0038] The manager 6 manages registered information which is necessary to convert the virtual personal information into the real personal information. A converter 7 within the manager 6 converts the virtual personal information into the real personal information based on the registered information. The registered information may take the form of a conversion table shown in FIG. 2. In addition, the manager 6 notifies the real personal information and the charge of the cost related to the purchase of the item to a financial company (or financial business) 8 such as a bank and a credit card company, and the charge is made from the financial company 8 to the real user 10. The real personal information notified from the manager 6 to the financial company 8 after approval of the settlement includes the real name of the individual (real user 10), the real bank account number, the real credit card number and the like. On the other hand, a transportation company (or the post office) 9 delivers the purchased item based on the real personal information which is notified from the manager 6 after approval of the settlement.

[0039] The intranet 4 and the virtual city 5 may be provided within the manager 6 or, provided independently outside the manager 6. In other words, the virtual city 5 may be provided by an organization (or company) independent from the manager 6 but tied up with the manager 6 or, may be provided by the manager 6. In addition, the financial company 8 and the transportation company 9 may respectively be organizations which are independent of the virtual city and/or the manager 6 or, the same organization.

[0049] A server system 31 shown in FIG. 3 forms a managing apparatus of the manager 6 shown in FIG. 1. The server system 31 is connected to a server system 21 which is provided on the intranet 4 shown in FIG. 1 and

provides the virtual city 5. Each of the server systems 31 and 21 has a known hardware structure similar to that of a computer system.

The Examiner is pointing out that a manager acts as an interface or converter between the real world and virtual world. The Examiner is unable to find where the manager is within a virtual world.

Applicant continues on page 6, 4th paragraph:

By at least the aforementioned features, virtual personal information of a virtual world is communicated to a manager within the virtual world. As a result, security is further improved by communicating virtual information within a virtual world.

It is respectfully submitted that Shiloh does not disclose the aforementioned features. Rather, Shiloh is directed to a method and system for securing user identities and creating virtual users to enhance privacy on a communication network. As described in Fig. 1, the system includes an Anonymous Virtual Personality Provider ("AVPP") real world site 22 and an AVPP Internet site 24. (see Shiloh, paragraph [0045]). The AVPP real world site communicates with real user 10 who is completely anonymous via Internet, but is known to the AVPP real world site 22. The user 10 accesses the Internet 12 with a virtual personality 110 to engage in various activities. (see Shiloh, paragraph [0028] and [0046]). For example, the user 10 may purchase goods from a website of an electronic retailer ("e-tailer") 14, participate in chat rooms or games 16, or surf the Web using a search engine 18. As a result, Shiloh describes a communication between a virtual user and the real world.

However, Shiloh is silent as to "communicating...virtual personal information of a virtual world...to a manager within a virtual world." This silence is not surprising since Shiloh is related to virtual users communicating to the real world. Therefore, Shiloh does not teach or suggest the aforementioned features recited in amended independent claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Shiloh.

The Applicant is arguing that Shiloh does not communicate virtual information of a virtual world to a manager within a virtual world. Also, that Shiloh is related to virtual users communicating in a real world.

The Examiner points out that the virtual users of Shiloh communicate via the Internet (Fig. 1, ref. 12 and 15), which is how Applicants virtual users communicate (Fig. 1, ref. 2). The Examiner also points out that both Shiloh and Applicant must have a real world device (server with a database) to convert (act as manager) between the real world and virtual world. Therefore, the Examiner

respectfully disagrees with the Applicant that there is a difference between Shiloh and Applicant's invention.

Applicant argues claim 2 on page 7, 1st paragraph:

Regarding the rejection as to claim 2, as mentioned above, Shiloh is related to a person using a virtual identity to communicate to the real world. Specifically, Shiloh is directed to making commercial transactions in a real world environment by a virtual user representing a real person. For example, as described in paragraph [0028] of Shiloh, a virtual user is able to purchase goods over the Internet at electronic retailer ("e-tailer") sites. Therefore, all commercial transactions in Shiloh are made in the real world by a virtual user.

However, independent claim 2 recites, "making a commercial transaction in a virtual world on a network, based on virtual personal information of the virtual world received via the network." Therefore, making a real world transaction, as described in Shiloh, does not constitute "making a commercial transaction in a virtual world," as recited in independent claim 2. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Shiloh does not teach or suggest making a commercial transaction in a virtual world.

The Examiner notes that Applicant's virtual user has access to a "virtual city" via the Internet, and that the virtual city is located on an Intranet (Fig. 1). As pointed out by the Applicant above, Shiloh teaches purchasing goods at an electronic retailer. The Examiner finds that both Shiloh and Applicant are interfacing electronically with electronic retailers and in fact notes Applicant teaches:

[0035] The virtual user 1 uses the virtual personal information and accesses a virtual city 5 on the Web, via a network such as the Internet 2.

It is respectfully submitted that independent claim 2 patentably distinguishes over Shiloh. Claims 3-8 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 2 and inherit the patentable features thereof. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that dependent claims 3-8 patentably distinguish over Shiloh.

The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Applicant argues claim 9, on page 7, 4th paragraph:

Regarding the rejection as to independent claim 9, as mentioned above, Shiloh enables a real user to communicate to the real world by using a virtual user name. However, Shiloh fails to teach or suggest "converting the virtual personal information received from the virtual city within the virtual world via a network into corresponding real personal information of the real world, based on the registered information," as recited in amended independent claim 9. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 9 patentably distinguishes over Shiloh. Claims 10 and 11 depend

from independent claim 9 and inherit the patentable features thereof. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that dependent claims 10 and 11 patentably distinguish over Shiloh.

The Applicant is arguing that Shiloh does not convert virtual personal information from a virtual city within a virtual world into real personal information. However, the Examiner notes that Shiloh teaches:

[0025] The AVPP in accordance with the invention implements fundamental separation between a user's real identity and the user's Internet identity (i.e., the virtual personality), whereby no information linked to the real identity is ever communicated via the Internet. According to this concept, The AVPP preferably consists of two separate sub-systems, namely, a virtual world system and a real world system. The two sub-systems do not communicate with each other via conventional Internet connections.

[0027] In another preferred embodiment of the invention, a real user's identity is disclosed only to the AVPP, or to one or some of the organs of the AVPP, by conventional methods, e.g., in person, by mail, by phone, by direct connection, etc., depending on the level of comfort of the user in using any of those conventional methods. The AVPP may then provide the user with a virtual user name and virtual user information, which may include an identification code as in the previous embodiment, which may be used over the Internet to authenticate the user. Once the real user has been authenticated at an Internet site of the AVPP, which site may be accessed via standard Internet access tools, the real user may edit the virtual user information and/or add more information related to the virtual user. According to this embodiment, the linking between the real user information and the virtual user information is known only to the user and to an organ of the AVPP operating in the real world, i.e., off the Internet.

Therefore, the virtual user is able to shop at electronic stores using their virtual identity without ever disclosing their real identity.

Applicant argues claim 12 on page 7, last paragraph:

Regarding the rejection as to independent claim 12, the Office Action, on page 5 item i, alleges that at paragraph [0031] Shiloh discloses "virtual users are able to make purchases of goods, presumably from virtual stores." However, it is respectfully submitted that paragraph [0031] of Shiloh does not disclose making purchases from a virtual store. Rather, paragraph [0031] of Shiloh describes that AVPP establishes physical mailboxes that are assigned to subscribers, under their virtual identity and may be accessed at locations affiliated with AVPP.

The Examiner cites the following from Shiloh:

The virtual entity may purchase products and services from Web-based businesses, using payment methods as described herein. [0020]

Further, Shiloh does not teach or suggest "commercial transaction being made between a first virtual individual and an arbitrary one of the virtual shops, based on virtual personal information of the first virtual individual," as recited in independent claim 12. Rather, at paragraph [0032], Shiloh describes an electronic retailer ("e-tailer") site from which a virtual user may purchase goods. However, the "electronic retailer" as described in Shiloh does not constitute a "virtual shop" as recited in claim 12.

The Examiner notes that Applicant teaches the following:

[0034] The second reason for registering the virtual personal information is to avoid problems when making a transaction within the virtual world. For example, when opening a virtual shop within the virtual world, it is necessary to provide information which indicates the location of the virtual shop. In the electronic commercial transaction within the real world, it is possible to indicate the location of the shop by the URL. Accordingly, the location of the virtual shop within the virtual world can be indicated similarly by the URL, but this would require each user to prepare a homepage.

The Examiner notes that Applicant is teaching a virtual shop in a virtual world can be indicated by a URL. Therefore, the Examiner respectfully finds that the internet retailer of Shiloh would qualify as a virtual shop.

The Applicant continues on page 8, 2nd paragraph:

The Advisory Action (mailed on December 3, 2007) asserted that the provisional application of Shiloh teaches "Virtuality users will be able to lead a full virtual life on the Internet" (see Advisory Action; Continuation Sheet (PTO-303), Items 1 and 2). The Advisory Action further asserted that "using your virtual accounts with Virtuality, you will be able to research and shop the internet ... without disclosing any details linked to your real identity".

However, claim 1 of the present invention, for example, discloses "communicating, via a network, virtual personal information of a virtual world ... to a manager within a virtual world". In addition, claim 12 of the present invention, for example, discloses "a commercial transaction being made between a first individual and an arbitrary one of the virtual shop". The provisional application of Shiloh does not disclose such features since the provisional application of Shiloh describes making communications and/or transactions in the real world using a virtual identity of a real user. Specifically, the provisional application of Shiloh describes using virtual accounts with Virtuality to

research and shop the internet, e.g. taking care of all real world needs, without using your real identity (see provisional application of Shiloh, page 2, lines 2-4). Therefore, the provisional application of Shiloh is silent as to the above-mentioned features of the present invention regarding independent claims 1, 2, 9 and 12. This silence is not surprising since the provisional application of Shiloh describes communicating and/or making transaction between a virtual user and the real world (e.g. a real store).

The Examiner notes that a virtual store can be indicated by a URL and a homepage. The Examiner also notes that the provisional application teaches:

"Payments by virtual personalities over the Internet may be in the form of a virtual credit/debit card registered to your fictional personality." (pg. 5, 2nd para.) This would be used to make payments to a virtual shop as defined above.

The Examiner concludes at the bottom of page 8:

Therefore, based upon the above-mentioned discussions, it is respectfully submitted that the provisional application of Shiloh fails to teach or remotely suggest the above-mentioned features of claims 1, 2, 9 and 12. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 2, 9 and 12 patentably distinguish over both Shiloh and the provisional application of Shiloh. Further, the dependent claims patentably distinguish over both Shiloh and the provisional application of Shiloh for the same reasons as their respective base claims.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of all rejections.

The Examiner respectfully maintains the rejections based on the above responses.

Applicant provides a new claim on top of page 9:

(NEW) A method, comprising:

communicating virtual information of a virtual user to at least one of a plurality of virtual entities within a virtual world, both the virtual user and the plurality of virtual entities representing a real person and real entities; and managing registered information of the virtual user and real user to convert virtual information into real information of a person.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Shiloh nor the provisional application of Shiloh fails to teach or remotely suggest that above-mentioned features of new claim 16. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that new claim 16 patentably distinguishes over both Shiloh and the provisional application of Shiloh.

The Examiner responds below to the new claim.

Applicant requests review of IDS:

The Advisory Action requested that entire disclosure of the references AG and AH be submitted along with the Abstract to be properly considered (see Advisory Action; Continuation Sheet (PTO-303), Item 3). In response, Applicants have respectfully re-submitted the Information Disclosure Sheet (IDS) including a PTO-1449 indicating the references AG and AH have been submitted with an Abstract and respective disclosures of the references. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that Examiner consider references AG and AH.

The Examiner has read the abstracts. The Examiner is unclear from the abstracts how they relate to the current application because both abstracts are directed towards securely carrying out electronic commerce. The current application and claims are directed toward creating a virtual world with virtual personal information. The Examiner therefore, would require an English translation of the disclosures to understand how they relate to the current application. However, the Examiner believes the current prior art being cited is directly related to the current application and therefore at this point does not find a need to incorporate other prior art in the Office Action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention lacks patentable utility. The method claim converts information, but there is no step that provides a useful, concrete, and tangible result (see MPEP 2016 IV C 2). The method claim converts virtual information into real world information, but there is no step that produces useful, concrete, and tangible results from the converted virtual personal information.

Claims 2-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because of preemption (see Ex Parte Bilski, (BPAI 2006)). Bilski states that an identifying characteristic of an abstract idea is "...if the claim is so broad that it covers (preempts) any and every possible way that the steps can be performed, because there is no "practical application" if no specific way is claimed to perform the steps." In the instant case, claim 2 is so broad that it encompasses any type of commercial transaction such as: auctions; financial security trading; purchase of goods and securities; etc. Claims 3-8 are rejected because they depend from claim 2.

Claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention lacks patentable utility. The method claim provides a means for managing registered information and means for converting virtual personal information, but there is no step that provides a useful, concrete, and tangible result (see MPEP 2016 IV C 2). The method claim converts virtual information into real world information, but there is no step that actually teaches the usefulness of doing this.

Claims 12-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claim 12 describes a "virtual city space" but there is no indication if the claim is a method, product or system claim. If the claim is a system claim, it should state this in the preamble and the system needs to be described in more detail, such as computers linked to a network and a server for managing virtual/real information, etc. Claims 13-15 are rejected because they depend from claim 12.

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention lacks patentable utility. The method claim teaches communicating virtual information and managing registered information, , but there is no step that provides a useful, concrete, and tangible result (see MPEP 2016 IV C 2).

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because of preemption (see *In re Bilski*, 2006). *Bilski* states that an identifying characteristic of an abstract idea is "...if the claim is so broad that it covers (preempts) any and every possible way that the steps can be performed, because there is no "practical application" if no specific way is claimed to perform the steps." In the instant case, claim 16 is so broad that it would apply to everyone on the Internet.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

6. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Claim 1 teaches "... a manager within a virtual world." The Examiner is unable to find support in the specification for this claim element. The Examiner finds support for a manager and managing apparatus, but the manager

appears to act as an interface (converter) between the real and virtual world and does not appear to reside in a virtual world.

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps are: there is no step that initially registers the real information; there is no step that creates the virtual information from the registered information; there is no step where something useful, concrete, and tangible is performed.

9. Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Independent claims 1, 2, 9, 12, and 16 teach "virtual personal information" and "real personal information" where this could include anything. Claims 3-8, 10-11, and 13-15 are rejected because they depend from their respective independent claims.

10. Claims 2-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps are: a step where virtual personal information is created from real world information; a step where the commercial transaction made in the virtual world is converted or realized in the real world since

commercial transactions involve real monetary transactions. Claims 3-8 are rejected because they depend from claim 2.

11. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

12. Claim 16 teaches the step of communicating virtual information, but there is no indication how this happens (such as on a computer network), and there are many ways this could happen. Also, claim 16 teaches "managing registered information" where it is unclear what this means. For example, is managing simply storing data on a database or does it involve receiving, storing, and converting virtual information to real information.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

13. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

14. Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Pub.

No. US 2001/0037316 to Shiloh.

15. Regarding applicant claims 1-15, Shiloh discloses:

- a. A communication network that includes the Internet, intranets, and local networks (bottom of para. 18);
- b. A real entity represented by a virtual entity "...with an imaginary name, an imaginary address, a virtual social security number, and any other data that may be required for the Internet activity of the virtual entity." (middle of para. 20);
- c. A computer system that manages both the real and virtual person (para. 21 and para. 25), and provides a link between the virtual user and the real user (bottom of para. 27);
- d. Ability to conduct commercial transactions on the Internet using a "virtual personality" (para. 22);
- e. Shipping items to a real address based on a virtual transaction (middle of para. 31) by a virtual entity;
- f. The ability of a virtual person to authenticate (confirm) a transaction on the Internet using a fictional user name and information (middle of para. 26);
- g. The user logs into a site by "...presenting the virtual user access ID and virtual user access password..." to gain access to their virtual identity (para. 85);
- h. A virtual entity may obtain a virtual debit and credit card number (para. 20);
- i. Virtual users are able to make purchases of goods, presumably from virtual stores (middle of para. 31);

j. Users can have personalized virtual home pages that serve as "homes" for the virtual entities (middle of para. 35) and a "...virtual entity may enter a chat room and interact with other real and/or virtual entities." (para. 20);

k. The system "...may be an organization operating a server site or series of server sites providing access to the Internet and/or other services..." (para. 21). Therefore, while "virtual station" and "virtual city space" are not discussed, Shiloh has the capability of offering it in that they provide virtual address information and provide management of the system. Also, entities can change personalities, which would include their virtual address (para. 23).

l. "The system of the present invention is generally referred to herein as an Anonymous Virtual Personality Provider (AVPP). In an exemplary embodiment of the invention, an AVPP may include an organization and/or a combination of computer hardware and/or software which provides services according to the system and method of the invention, such as an ISP, an Internet portal, financial services, shipping infrastructure, or any other system or organization that may be required in order to conduct business and/or to provide services on the Internet. For example, the AVPP may be an organization operating a server site or series of server sites providing access to the Internet and/or other services that may be required in order to implement and manage the virtual entities. (para. 21)

m. "As described above, payments by a virtual personality over the Internet may be in the form of a virtual credit/debit cards registered to the

virtual personality. This may be implemented using a real credit card number that may be issued to the AVPP by an existing credit card company. The AVPP may be directly responsible for the payment of its virtual users' credit card bills. For billing and credit card authentication purposes, each virtual credit card of an AVPP user may be registered with the address of the AVPP and the fictional identification information assigned to each user." (para. 33) Therefore, AVPP manages is responsible for converting virtual information into real world information.

Conclusion

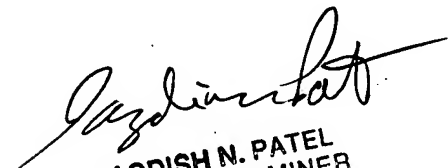
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kenneth L. Bartley whose telephone number is (571) 272-5230. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 8:00 - 5:00 EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jagdish Patel can be reached on (571) 272-6748. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



JAGDISH N. PATEL
PRIMARY EXAMINER